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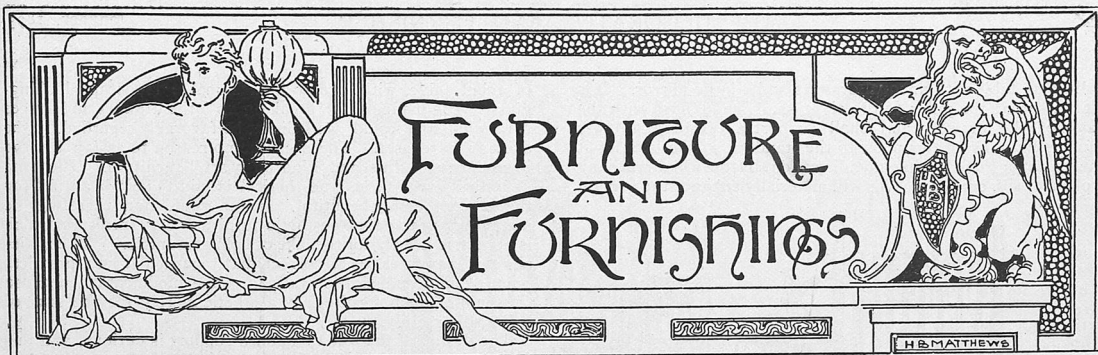
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## QUAINT AND SIMPLE BEDROOM FURNITURE.



*SINEQUA NON* in the matter of bedroom furniture nowadays is novelty of form and arrangement. Old-fashioned convenience and rational construction have given place to a more up-to-date order of things, and new-fangled notions of curtains, book-shelves and *bric-à-brac* nooks are now regarded as essential to the artistic well-being of almost every kind and condition of bedroom suite; whereas in early Victorian days the purchaser looked first of all for convenience in his furniture and then to the beauty of the mahogany and the quantity and elaboration of the carving; nowadays

it seems to be the vogue to judge a piece of bedroom furniture by its eccentricity, and the number of more or less useless little nooks and crannies that trespass upon what might be valuable

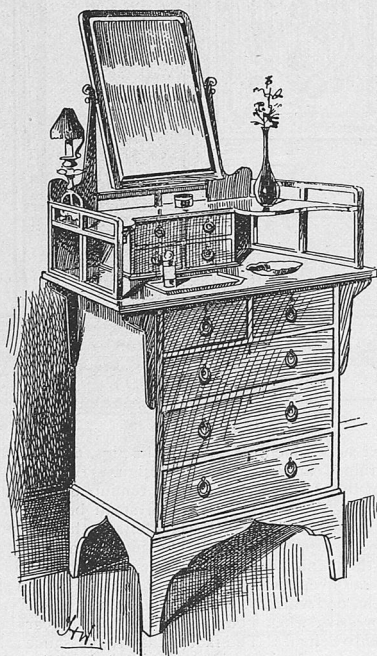


FIG. 1.

space. Such a condition of things is welcome enough as a novelty (and it would find unlimited appreciation in Europe, where bedroom furniture designed upon orthodox lines seems to be the only kind obtainable from native manufacturers), but occasionally in our cheaper productions we are apt to seriously,

or rather comically, overdo the quaint fashion of the times. Be this as it may, however, there is a demand, both at home and abroad, for something quaint and novel, and therefore we have decided to devote the few following pages to a practical consideration of this not uninteresting subject.

It was the introduction of the Japanese style, some ten or

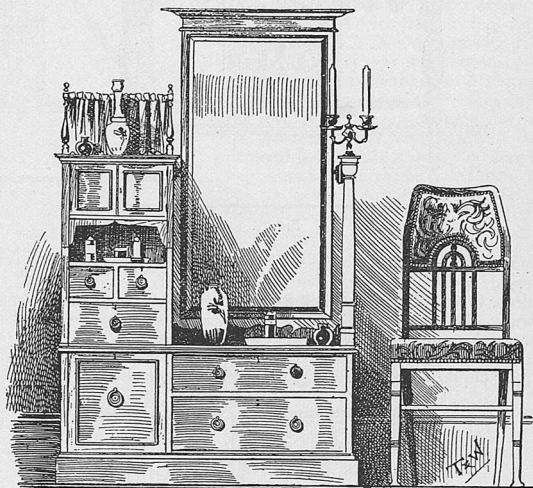


FIG. 2.

fifteen years ago, that suggested the quaint spirit which now pervades our fashions; and to it we may attribute the present license and warranty for our national indulgence in the one-sided type of furniture which is now so common. Until the Japanese familiarized us with such irregularities, wardrobes and toilet tables of unequally arranged sides would have been regarded as absurdities. In those days it was supposed that two sides of every piece of furniture should exactly correspond, and no attempt seems ever to have been made to break through this quite gratuitous regulation. The clever, sprightly little artists of the Land of the Rising Sun, however, have shown us that a mysterious charm lies hidden in the fashion of unequal designing. The curious *bric-à-brac* cabinets of the East betray much beautiful cunning in their unconventional construction, and the admiration of them, which we involuntarily bestow, has prompted the industrial artists of our own land to indulge their fancies in a similarly eccentric vein. The employment of strained soft woods has materially advanced this cause of so-called æstheticism by making it economical; and it is a moot question whether such "art furniture" would have been so beloved for "art's" sake if it had entailed the outlay of additional cash. The majority of our rough sketches and suggestions herewith are therefore intended to be manufactured in ash or basswood and stained green, cherry color, or deep, warm gold—a tint which may be produced by using Brunswick brown, and a tint which we have tried and much admire. The first of our sketches shows a most useful type of dressing bureau constructed on old-fashioned lines, with a nest of jewel drawers under the dressing mirror. Fig. 2 exhibits

a dressing table with unequal drawers and a large mirror. It is intended that the pillar to the right shall stand flush with the front of the drawers and shall support a two-branch brass candelabra. From this pillar to the standard at the back of it there must be a connecting moulding and rail from which will hang a plush or silk curtain. This will materially enhance the general

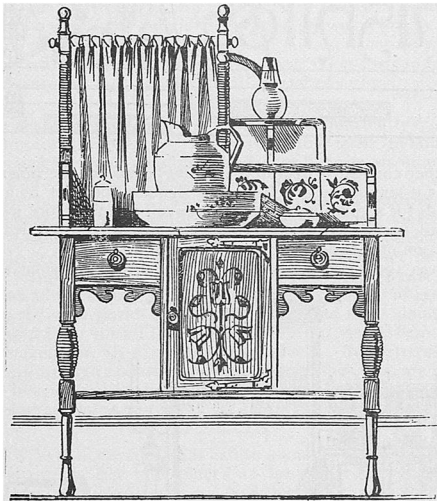


FIG. 3.

appearance. It will be necessary, too, to make the back standard very deep from back to front for purposes of strength, as the mirror is heavy; and also in order to permit the glass to be easily swung when in position, it will be advisable to hang the frame two or three inches forward from the line of the back. The large, deep drawer in the lower part is intended for bonnets, and the upper cupboard recedes the usual distance from the front.

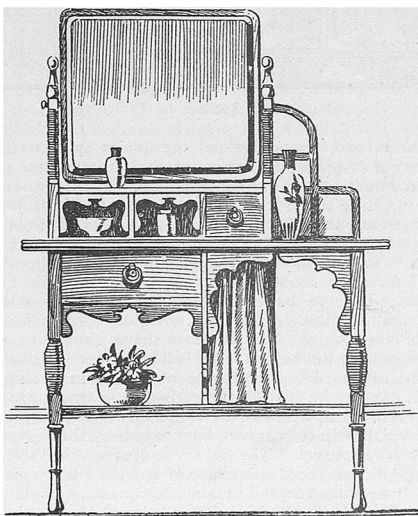


FIG. 4.

The design of the small chair at the side is similarly quaint, and will serve as a useful suggestion for either a bedroom or a drawing room chair.

Somewhat in the style of Japan, and with a *souçon* of Moorish feeling in the shaped arches, is the strange little suite which we indicate in Figs. 3, 4 and 5. Here we have a less expensive type

of toilet table, with a now-so-fashionable landscape looking-glass. The manner of "breaking up" the drawers and spaces is original, and would, we believe, be favorably regarded by the average purchaser. There can be no reason to assign for the irregularity of this and kindred "art" furniture. The true definition of the term "aesthetic" is said to be "beautiful for the sake of being beautiful," and it would not, therefore, be inappropriate to define aesthetic furniture as "furniture which is eccentric merely for the sake of being eccentric." Theoretically this may be taken as correct, but regarded from a practical point of view its definition calls for some modification, because the bulk of such furniture is aesthetic merely for the sake of being sold readily.

The design of the toilet standard support is curious, and this feature has been reproduced over the front of the smaller cupboard of the wardrobe. The panel of this cupboard is intended to be ornamented with carved incising in the strange and poetical manner of design affected by the aesthetical *fin de siècle* artists of the present time.

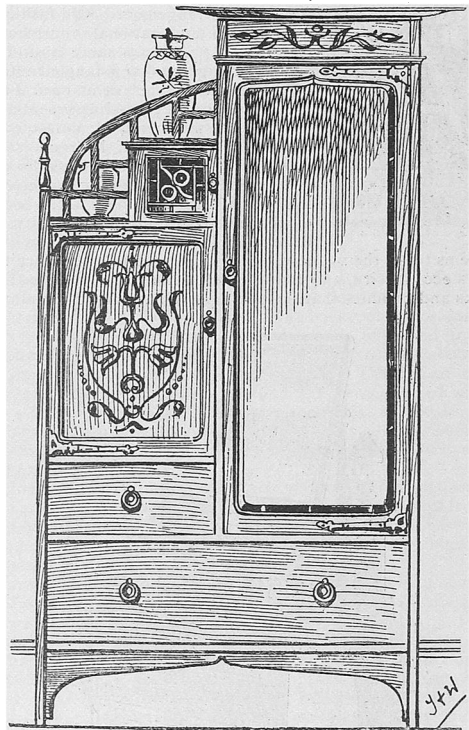


FIG. 5.

The next suite which we illustrate in Figs. 6, 7 and 8, is similarly restrained and peculiar in design. The slight upward tapering of the glass and its supports remind one of the quaint conceptions of the land of Isis. The small box at the side of the table is constructed on the angle, and the two projecting cheeks which support it should be pierced and very slightly carved in the manner indicated. The crude scroll work on the broad top rail over the mirror is characteristic of the simplicity of this style, and will most certainly strike the uninitiated as flat and inexpressive when compared with the rich carving of the Cinque Cento School. The fact is that Renaissance art is a full rich song, and aesthetic art is a sweet plaintive murmur—an art which delights in nocturnes, dreamy poetry, and weird awkwardness generally. Anything that is clear, incisive, crisp, and full of healthful vigor is foreign to this doleful style. It may be beautiful. It claims Rossetti, and it resembles in its strangeness the yearning, dirty-skinned, unhealthful, dreamy-eyed maidens that he so ably painted, and which his satellites continue still to portray. There are marvelous possibilities in this

style for artists of true sentiment. In it the designer may more manifestly express his feelings than he could in any stereotyped style of art, but not at popular prices. Alas! and alack! we have survived the shock of a Louis Quinze rage. Unfeeling copyism of detail, and a general contortion and debasement of that already debased style, have accustomed us to the sight of woful ugliness; but who shall predict what is in store for the sensitive connoisseur when æsthetic furniture becomes popular?

The straightforward designing of five or ten years ago—such, for instance, as Talbert favored—probably represented the acme of good taste and convenience. The straight-fronted toilet tables, with their jewel drawers on either side the dressing glass, have never since been surpassed, and variations from those lines generally result in a proportionate diminution of comfort and beauty. The stern mandate of fashion, however, demands "novelty," and thus we are constantly being confronted with more or less cranky arrangements of the "art" kind, which, though they attract attention and buyers, do not offer any improvement upon the modern Jacobean lines of recent prevalence.

#### DECORATIVE NOTES.

TO select china in any form or pattern is to have true artistic sense. The pattern should be good, the form shapely, the decoration pure and pleasing. It is not only the well-to-do that can make for themselves the gift in this beautiful ceramic art. But as the purse is varied, there are endless sets of china that can be obtained at simple expense and yet prove a treasure at all times. Besides the standard goods, there are all grades

The chrysanthemum takes precedence, and to some lovers of cut glass, far surpasses the coronet. There are good size platters, with one dozen charming little dishes as saucers, which for brilliancy cannot be surpassed. Every sort of cut glass can be purchased, from the tiny salt-cellar to the tall flower vase, which of itself is a jewel of great price, a gem of the first water, casting in the shade all its brilliant companions.

Just one word for the bread and butter plate—those comfortable little dishes which are used on all ordinary occasions, but not at the formal dinner. The clear idea of the bread and butter plate originated in England, where a slice of bread was buttered and put on a small plate before each guest. Just one slice, and for eating no more was expected, and thus it was that the bread and butter plate found its birth.

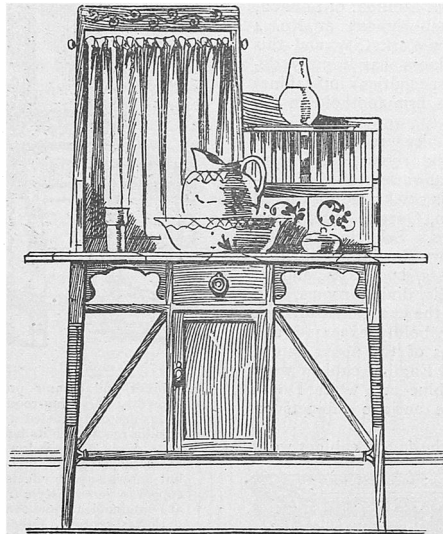


FIG. 6.

THE tapestry art shared in the general awakening of Europe to new creative life in the thirteenth century. The decorative purpose of tapestry was strongly insisted upon. Public ceremonies and private festivities were made the excuse for the display of great magnificence in the matter of wall hangings, and the demand being what it was, the supply kept pace with it. The specimens of twelfth century tapestry preserved in German museums prove that the high warp process was universally known at that time. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the tapestry art, according to modern classification, assumed a definite position,

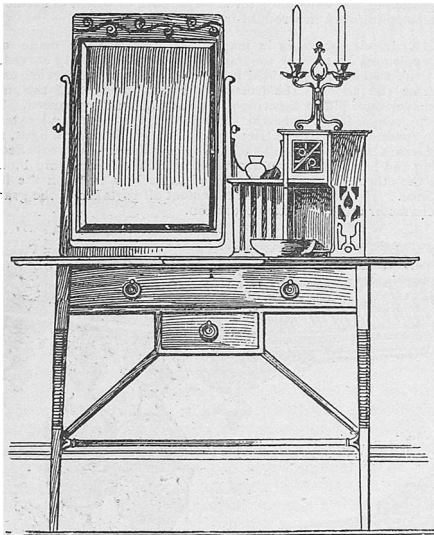


FIG. 7.

and prices possessing patterns of the newest style; decorations which for artistic merit are unequaled.

With all the varied and multitudinous scenes and conventional designs in chinaware, the dishes for creams and ices are beyond question a wonder. For the American dessert nothing could be better, so excellent in shape, so superb in pattern.

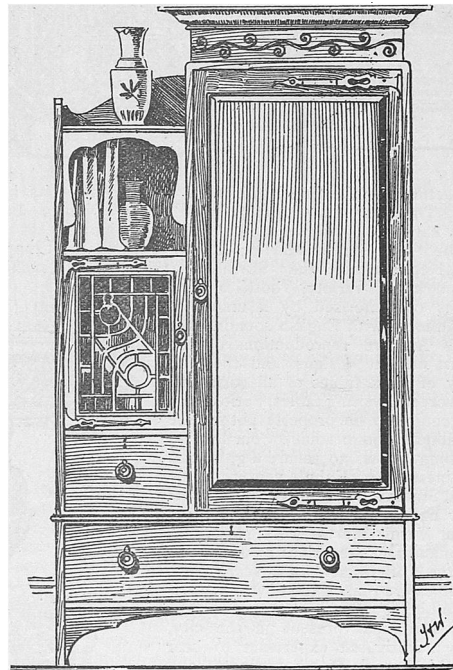


FIG. 8.

through the work done by the weavers of Flanders and the north of France. Paris, Arras and Flanders became the centers of the industry.